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THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

INTERLUDES

Books by Mr. Jones

The Path o' Dreams

The Rose-Jar

From Quiet Valleys

INTERLUDES

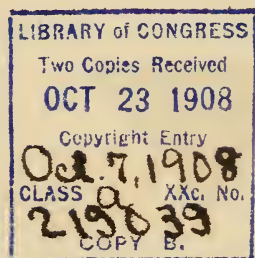
BY

THOMAS S. JONES, JR.



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Thanks are due the editors of the various publications in which the poems of this collection originally appeared for their kind permission to reprint.

AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED
TO
MY FATHER



YOUTH

I shall remember then,
At twilight time or in the hush of dawn,
Or yet, mayhap, when on a straying wind
The scent of lilac comes, or when
Some strain of music startles and is gone.

Old dreams, old roses, all so far behind,
Blossoms and birds and ancient shadow-trees,
Whispers at sunset, the low hum of bees,
And sheep that graze beneath a Summer sun.
Will they too come, they who in yester-year
Walked the same paths and in the first of Spring,
And shall I hear
Their distant voices murmuring?

I shall remember then
When youth is done,
With the dim years grown gray;
And I shall wonder what it is that ends,
And why they seem so very far away—
Old dreams, old roses . . . and old friends.

JOYOUS-GARD

Wind-washed and free, full-swept by rain and wave,
By tang of surf and thunder of the gale,
Wild be the ride yet safe the barque will sail,
And past the plunging seas her harbor brave;
Nor care have I that storms and waters rave,
I cannot fear since you can never fail—
Once have I looked upon the burning grail,
And through your eyes have seen beyond the grave.

I know at last—the strange, sweet mystery,
The nameless joy that trembled into tears,
The hush of wings when you were at my side—
For now the veil is rent and I can see,
See the true vision of the future years,
As in your face the love of Him who died!

THE ROSE HAS BLOWN AWAY

The rose has blown away,
And the song-bird now is still,
Yet little care had they
Save to echo Nature's will.

But in us a sadness grows
At the ending of the strain,
For the petals of the rose
That will never bloom again.

And I think this needs must be,
As a gleam through grated bars,
Hint of some great mystery
Past the outposts of the stars!

To J. B. R.

TO WILD-ROSES

The wild-rose riots and the lichens cling,
And all o'errun with tangled brier and thorn,
Within the alder still the thrushes sing,
Because they know not change nor things outworn.

Tangle and wild-rose and a ruined wall,
Silence and sunlight and a voiceless pain,
The haunting smell of roses and the fall
Of leaves full-blown that will not bud again.

E. A. MacD.

TO A POET DYING YOUNG

Youth at its best—the stirring, joyous tread,
The wind-blown hair upon the lap of May,
A scent of breaking buds unwitherèd,
A flush of dawn across the edge of day.

Rose wine and purple, nor the last dregs drained,
With all the wonder of one waking kiss;
Finding the end of life, unsought, unstained,
Finding and losing in a youth like this.

Gold of the sun, without the gloom of eve,
Still singing ere the song were yet half sung;
Youth at its best—ah, sweeter to believe
That happy they the gods love who die young.

In Memoriam, R. G. D.

NOON-TIDE

As in some old and simple village street
Where all day long the lazy shadows lean,
And the soft sunshine sifting in between
Makes golden all the road-side at my feet;
Where overhead the arching branches meet,
Holding me close with walls of cloistered green,
Where scents come homeward clover-lade and keen,
And ways are homely, and the long hours sweet:

So ever at a moment's thought of you
Amid this moil, I seem again to stand
In an old lane where we were wont to pass—
Afar the hum of bees is wafted through,
The sleepy pastures smile on either hand,
And life lies dreaming in the tangled grass.

FROM THE HILLS

For you the white-wracked waste—yet not for me—

The roar of tempests and the storm-god's song,
All that is sad and strange and sweet at sea,
All that is fierce and strong.

I too have tasted of the salt-sea wine
And heard a-riot the wild winds at play;
The heart's full beat, the joyous anodyne
Of salt-sea spray.

This, this at last—a quiet intervale,
Kissed by soft lights and gladdened by the sun;
You, of the curling surf, the blast, the gale—
I, of oblivion.

LONGING

Can this be summer, though the gentle heat
Has swept the roses on a wind of June,
And borne their fragrance to my aimless feet
That go unheeding 'neath a ghostly moon.

And all the poplars vague and motionless,
And all the lights soft in a silver-gray;
Can this be so, and with such loveliness,—
Can this be summer, dear, with you away?

So hushed, so quiet where the shadows throng
Across the pool between the starlight's stain,
Watching in silence all the still night long,
Watching in silence, and for you in vain.

Summer and starlight and an hour grown late,—
And you who will not come, and I who wait!



AN ETUDE IN IVORY

A gleam of amber through the sunset's glow
And on the keys your hands that softly creep,
Aimlessly wandering like little sheep,
Lost in a pasture-land of long ago.
Dusk and the shadows sifting to and fro . . .
And far away upon some twilit steep,
Fast in the dew-washed asphodel asleep,
Drunken in dreams that stir as drifted snow :

Where now the wind is but a shepherd's reed,
And overhead the clouds a scattered fleece,
Swift as the scud and restless as the sea . . .
Or where, borne home across that pallid mead,
I see no more the lovely vales of Greece,—
Only your hands that are of ivory !

To T. W. M.

THE EMPTY YEARS

Under the trees all tremulous,
The night-wind in our ears,
A little voice calls out to us
Across the space of years.

A little voice all tremulous,
Stifled with unshed tears—
A little cry to both of us
Across the empty years.

MAY-EVE

Over the hill, over the hill,
The dewes are wet and the shadows long,
Twilight lingers and all is still
Save for the call of a faery-song.

Calling, calling out of the west,
Over the hill in the dusk of day,
Over the hill to a land of rest,
A land of peace with the world away.

Never again where grasses sweep,
And lights are low, and the cool brakes still—
Never a song, but a dreamless sleep,
Over the hill . . . over the hill.

BEAUTY

The breath of winds within a cloistered wood,
The song of birds when twilight tints the skies,
A love-song throbbing through night's solitude
Beneath the silver stars that are Dream's eyes.

Deep-shaded by the stillness of a grove,
Harking the whispers of dim-hidden trees;
Or lying in the bracken interwove
With rose-vermilion and the gold of bees.

'Tis hers, the sovereign of this fair domain,
Whose every way is sweetened with redress,
Whose house of all is far the richest fane,
Whose hands are heavy with strange loveliness.

My song is mute, there are no flowers to cull . . .
Life is too exquisite, too wonderful!

ON AN IDYL OF THEOCRITUS

To thee the haunting pipes of Pan belong
And merry revels from a sheltered glade,
Where in cool crystal depths slim naiads wade
And the dim woods proclaim a satyr throng;
A faun peeps through the copse with ardor strong
To capture some hid dryad half-afraid,
And I have seen the virgin forest-maid,—
All, all through thee and thy immortal song.

Far from this winter steep and cheerless snow,
Lure me away to that sweet southern sea,
Where in profusion rose and myrtles grow
Upon the fragrant banks of Sicily—
Where I, perchance, may hear the low flutes blow,
And dream I walked the meadow-lands with thee!

TWO SONGS IN SPRING

I

O little buds all bourgeoning with Spring,
You hold my winter in forgetfulness;
Without my window lilac branches swing,
Within my gate I hear a robin sing—
O little laughing blooms that lift and bless!

So blow the breezes in a soft caress,
Blowing my dreams upon a swallow's wing;
O little merry buds in dappled dress,
You fill my heart with very wantonness—
O little buds all bourgeoning with Spring!

II

At hint of Spring I have you back again—

The blush of apple-blossoms on the bough,
A scent of buds far sweeter for the rain . . .

At hint of Spring I have you back again,

And all of time is lost since then and now.

Your voice is hidden in the thrush's song,

And in the south-wind's slumbering refrain;

You needs must come, love is so very strong,

And we who found each other waited long—

At hint of Spring I have you back again!

MY SOUL IS LIKE A GARDEN-CLOSE

My soul is like a garden-close,
Where marjoram and lilac grow,
Where soft the scent of long ago
Over the border lightly blows.

Where sometimes homing winds at play
Bear the faint fragrance of a rose—
My soul is like a garden-close,
Because you chanced to pass my way.

THE SECRET

You cannot go,
For I have drunken of the wine of life,
For I have heard the music of the spheres,
Love's gladness and the strength of rugged strife—
I know!
Let him who will, for me no bitter fears,
Once lived and always through the stretch of time;
Beyond the veil I see the host sublime,
The moment's symbol for the endless years.
So I shall sing,
Because I know you mine,
Because the years can never take from me—
The joy of love, the draught of life's good wine,
My song to sing throughout eternity!

PRIMAVERA

What is it stirs,
What whisper calls within the wood
Breaking the winter solitude
Over snow-laden firs?
What whisper calls, what scent
Of vanished thing,
What waking merriment?
It is of Spring—
A dream of long ago when gods were young,
When Life was Youth, and Song were yet unsung;
Nor Death, nor Fear,
But Youth at best, and Springtime all the year.

So, for a little while remembering,
Do violets blow
And daffodils, as in the long ago—
A little while in Spring.
A little while,
A web of dreaming spun;
And through our blinding tears
Still smiling through the ever-changing years,
The lovely face of young Endymion!

ROSE-LEAVES

All of my rose-leaves do I garner here
And place them on an altar far apart,
Long have I gathered them from street and mart,
Where winds have blown them in a season drear;
And some do hold a kiss and some a tear,
Remembering the thorn and bitter smart,
Yet some may find a shelter in your heart,
From all my rose-leaves of a yester-year.



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